
Feedback on Proposed Redistricting Maps

1 message

Elizabeth Anne Bagasao [REDACTED]
To: Redistricting <redistricting@southpasadenaca.gov>
Cc: John Srebalus <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Mar 1, 2022 at 6:46 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of redistricting is to adjust the City's district lines to shifts in demographics. The data used to redraw the map are from the most recent Census. Per the City's website, this process is required by State law, the California Voters Rights Act, and should be guided by the spirit and intent of that law and not the desires or political conveniences of City leaders or even certain members of the public.

Cities are to "draw their district lines to reflect how local populations have changed" however not knowing exactly what those changes are, South Pasadena Tenants Union opted not to submit a public map but instead to provide our feedback on those submitted by the public as well as the NDC maps. It is our goal to take a position that, in a small city such as ours, it is still possible for all people to be equally represented by balancing each district economically and racially.

In review of all the maps, we find Public Map 105 to be the most democratic.

In comparing Public Map 105 to the current map, all other public maps and the NDC maps, the equal distribution of race, income and renters creates the most equality across the board with low income residents, renters and the various racial communities, almost equally represented in each district. This balance creates accountability to these groups by the entire Council. (We recognize that because of the nature of the types of dwellings which are district to District 4, it will always have a majority of renters.)

In contrast, the other maps represent disparities based on race and income by creating three districts with larger white and wealthy populations. This leads to an imbalance of power on the Council which is the exact opposite of what the State law has intended.

When the poor, people of color and renters are corralled primarily into two districts, our issues are outnumbered two to three every time. As advocates for the low income, workers and renters in South Pasadena, we have had

to work three times as hard to be heard by the council as have environmental and traffic advocates who are mostly white and upper income.

Public Map 105 appears to be an effort to truly balance the political, economic and racial scales of City Hall. While it is tidy to draw maps which visually “make sense”, it’s politically and socially just to draw maps which live up to the spirit of the California Voters Rights Act and do not disenfranchise the poor and people of color.

We assume that it is as unacceptable to our City leaders as it is to us to have two districts with less than 18% low income when it is easily possible to draw lines in which each district has between 18% and 24% percent low-income residents. Renters make up 52% of our population in both multi and single family homes in all neighborhoods of the City. Yet, all other maps, including the current map, have renters jammed mostly into two districts also creating at least two districts with fewer renters and more wealthy homeowners. As is illustrated by Public Map 105, which is geographically very similar to the current map, economic and racial balance across each district can be achieved.

South Pasadena Tenants Union looks forward to working with our city leaders to redistrict South Pasadena in the most democratic and socially just way possible. We put our trust in those who were elected to lead our city to uphold our democratic ideals and liberal values. If you have questions or would like more explanation on our feedback provided herein, please don’t hesitate to contact Anne Bagasao directly at 626-660-8837 or John Srebalus at 323-830-9642.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne Bagasao

on behalf of South Pasadena Tenants Union